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COMMERCIAL FISHERIES CATCH DECLINES IN 1952

The estimated catch of fish and shellfish in the United States and Alaska during 1952 declined slightly in both quantity and value from that of 1951, Albert M. Day, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, stated today in a preliminary report submitted to Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman.

The 1952 catch is estimated to have been 4.3 billion pounds, valued at \$335 million to the fishermen. This was approximately 100 million pounds and \$10 million less than during the previous year.

The decline in catch was due to smaller landings of California pilchard, Alaska herring, salmon, and ocean perch. The production of pilchard is the lowest it has been since it first became a major fishery. The decreases in these four important fisheries were only partially offset by increased landings of menhaden and Maine herring. The catch of menhaden (1.3 billion pounds) was the highest ever made.

The 1952 pack of canned fish is expected to be slightly less than last year's total of 800 million pounds. Decreased production of canned California sardines and salmon was nearly offset by increased packs of Maine sardines, Pacific mackerel, and jack mackerel, and record packs of tuna and anchovies. The record pack of tuna was due in a large measure to increased imports of frozen tuna which were used for canning as the domestic catch of tuna was about the same as in 1951 and considerably less than in 1950.

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